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Identical letters dated 9 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing to you with regard to the letter dated 4 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/425), which contains completely unfounded allegations that were also made in previous letters. In that connection, I should like to state the following:

- Qatar strongly deplores the allegations contained in the letter of the United Arab Emirates and once again categorically denies that any Qatari fighter aircraft came within an unsafe distance of Etihad Airways flight EY322 (registration No. A6-EIM) or any other civilian aircraft. In that connection, I should like to draw attention to my identical letters dated 5 May 2018 (S/2018/185) refuting similar allegations that were made by the United Arab Emirates.

- A United Arab Emirates military aircraft entered the airspace above Qatari water without obtaining prior authorization from the competent authorities of Qatar and flew along a route that was similar to the route flown by the civilian aircraft mentioned in the United Arab Emirates letter. In response, a Qatari military aircraft set out for north-eastern Qatar and towards the United Arab Emirates military aircraft. It should be noted that the air navigation service provider in Bahrain was aware of the mission of the Qatari military aircraft.

- Having failed to justify the multiple violations of Qatari airspace that its military aircraft had committed, the United Arab Emirates authorities have resorted to taking other provocative and irresponsible actions, such as having United Arab Emirates military aircraft fly through Qatari airspace, without the authorization of the competent authorities in Qatar, at the same time as United Arab Emirates civilian aircraft, with a view to contriving incidents and using them for tendentious purposes.

- Qatar regrets that the air navigation service provider in Bahrain breached its duties in an irresponsible manner, despite the repeated calls that the relevant Qatari authorities made upon it to fulfil its professional duty under international law and the relevant navigation service agreements. Qatar is profoundly concerned at and strongly disapproves of the position taken by the navigation service provider, because it constitutes a serious violation of the obligation to ensure that international air navigation standards are applied, particularly given that the provider's biased and unprofessional position can have serious consequences for the security and safety of civil aviation. The participation of

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Bahrain in the unjust blockade of and the illegal arbitrary measures that have been taken against Qatar does not relieve the air navigation service provider in Bahrain of its responsibility and duties under the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

- Respecting human rights and the principles of good-neighbourliness are among the highest policy priorities of Qatar. Accordingly, Qatar has not taken any punitive measures that could be detrimental to the civilian nationals of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, nor has it closed its airspace in response to the arbitrary and illegal measures that have been taken against Qatar and its people. Those measure include preventing Qatari civilian aircraft from flying in the airspace of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. The foregoing unequivocally refutes the allegations that have been made repeatedly by the United Arab Emirates, which claims that it is concerned about the safety and security of civil aviation and accuses Qatar of endangering the safety and security thereof, and demonstrates the extent to which Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates have been violating the rules governing air navigation and the Chicago Convention.

- It is the policy of Qatar to abide by international law scrupulously and cooperate with the international organizations that are charged with enforcing it. Moreover, Qatar strives assiduously to adhere to the highest quality standards in respect of maintaining civil aviation security and safety standards. Accordingly, it has made every effort to cooperate with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and support the efforts of ICAO to strengthen civil aviation safety and security standards and ensure full compliance with those standards, including by hosting the fifth ICAO conference on training and voluntarily supporting the "Leave No Country Behind" initiative.

Lastly, Qatar reaffirms that the repetition by the United Arab Emirates of the allegations set out in the above-mentioned letter from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates is intended to cover up the violations of Qatari airspace that the United Arab Emirates has committed repeatedly and to divert attention from its provocative and irresponsible actions, which include escalating regional tension by contriving incidents in order to obscure its ulterior motives, without regard for the security and stability of the region. Qatar reiterates that it is the obligation of the civil aviation authorities of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to manage the air navigation sector in a professional, serious, responsible and non-politicized manner. They must also steer clear of political strife and put professionalism above all other considerations The Government of Qatar reiterates that it is striving to exercise maximum self-restraint with regard to the provocative actions that have been taken by the United Arab Emirates, and that it strives assiduously to adhere to international law, the Charter of the United Nations and international conventions on air navigation regulations for international civil aviation.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alya Ahmed Saif **Al-Thani**
Permanent Representative